

BESSETTE, ALAN E., ORSON K. MILLER, JR., ARLEEN R. BESSETTE, and HOPE H. MILLER. 1995. **Mushrooms of North America in Color, A Field Guide Companion to Seldom-Illustrated Fungi.** (ISBN 0-8156-0323-1, pbk). Syracuse University Press, 1600 Jamesville Avenue, Syracuse, NY. 13244-5160. \$17.95. 188 pp, 74 color photographs, 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>".

A book like this one is long overdue. Congratulations go to Syracuse University Press for publishing a book that fills a mycological and scientific need by adding to the iconography of fungi but avoids duplicating the common edible species that adds pagination and higher costs. The authors estimate that of the more than 5,000 species of mushrooms that occur in North America less than half have been illustrated with color photographs. Most monographic publications use either line drawings or black and white photographs or rarely color paintings or photographs. In any case the species descriptions are highly technical and have limited value for a more general readership. The objective of this book is to provide an accurate but nontechnical, species description, a color illustration of high quality, and a discussion of its distinguishing characteristics. Each species is given a morphological description that highlights the fruiting body (cap, gills, stalk, flesh, technical features and spore print color). Under the topical heading fruiting is noted the habit, habitat and seasonality of occurrence. And lastly, the edibility, observations, and notes give a better understanding of the edibility, distinguishing characters and geographic distribution of each species. Each color photograph is about 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" and occupies about one-third of a page. The photographs are of high quality and show the necessary gross morphological characters for identification. There is a glossary, works cited and index that concludes the book. There are no keys. The authors state that "The species selected are those which are uncommon, rare or not well illustrated in the current literature." This book is intended to be a companion to other popular field guides. I highly recommend this book for any serious student of the fungi.—*Harold W. Keller, Research Associate, BRIT.*

JONES, MICHAEL. 1994. **Flowering Plants of the Gambia.** (ISBN 90 5410 197 0, pbk). A.A. Balkema Publishers, Old Post Road, Brookfield, VT 05036 (fax 802-276-3837). \$40.00. 132 pp, 160 color photographs, 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>".

Gambia is located in West-Central Africa and is one of the most densely populated countries of Africa. Much of the true forest has been destroyed by human encroachment and deforestation. This book will help document the need for preservation and greater appreciation for what is left of the original flora. There are introductory topical sections that briefly describe the geography, climate, geology and topography, soils, vegetation and phytogeography, botanical exploration, exsiccata, and botanical literature. These sections give a good general survey of the flora of The Gambia.

The species descriptions, mostly four to a page, are nontechnical and understandable by the general public. Flowering dates, habitats and local names and uses are given. The taxa are arranged into two classes: the Dicotyledoneae and Monocotyledoneae, and then into families, followed by introduced and well-known taxa. The color plates are arranged so that five photographs of varying size fill most of the page, with the scientific binomial of the plant and cross referenced page numbers where the species descriptions can be found,

as a caption at the bottom. The photographs are of good quality and show the general habit of the plant with flowers. The flowers are not shown in enough detail to discern the floral parts and familial characters.

The book is concluded by a short glossary, a list of about 35 references of mostly Gambian origin, and an index. It should appeal especially to foreign tourists who visit Gambia in ever increasing numbers.—*Harold W. Keller, Research Associate, BRIT.*

GUARINO, LUIGI, V. RAMANATHA RAO and ROBERT REID (Eds.). 1995. **Collecting Plant Genetic Diversity.** (ISBN 0-85198-964-0, hbk). The University of Arizona Press, 1230 N Park Avenue, Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719. \$120.00. 748 pp, 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>".

This is a compendium of generic, specific, theoretical and practical information that is aimed at both new and experienced collectors of plant germplasm. It is a comprehensive treatment published on behalf of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute in association with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The World Conservation Union and the United Nations Environment Programme.

There are 39 chapters, each prepared by different authors and each with a set of extensive references. The contents are organized around several themes: the introduction covers a brief history of plant germplasm collection, legal issues, and methods and procedures of collecting.

Before setting out includes: assessing the threat of genetic erosion, sampling strategy theory and practice, collecting wild species, classification of intraspecific variation in crop plants, published sources of information (on existing germplasm collections, on natural and human environments, on wild plant species), aids to taxonomic identification, bibliographic databases, ecogeographic surveys, mapping distribution of biodiversity, geographic information systems and remote sensing for plant germplasm. There is a wealth of information in this section that would be useful as a reference source for anyone working on and interested in the preservation of plant germplasm.

In the field includes: collecting plant genetic resources; gathering and recording data in the field; collecting seeds; collecting vegetatively propagated crops, collecting grasses, legumes, woody perennials, pollen, *Rhizobium*, *Frankia*, mycorrhizal fungi, and herbarium vouchers. These sections contain detailed information on how to collect various plant sources of germplasm but also provide more general information on how to handle plant structural parts. Plant collectors interested in field procedures and collections in a broader application than just germplasm would do well to read this section.

Back at base includes: processing and reporting germplasm data and collecting missions. A series of case studies, for example, collecting the rice gene pool, collecting rare species in Florida, and collecting Andean root and tuber crops, among others. There is far more information than can be covered briefly in a single review but anyone seriously interested in plant field collecting will benefit from reading this book.—*Harold W. Keller, Research Associate, BRIT.*